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Axtell



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EIGHTH GRADE POEMS

BY

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STATE NORMAL SCHOOL



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To the Grammar School Children of
Cortland State Normal School whose love
of the humor, pathos, mystery, sublimity
and music of juvenile literature has been
one of the author's chief inspirations.

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CHAPTER I

What the literature teacher should teach as shown by a study of the process of the psychological evolution of a literary masterpiece

The following chapter is intended to add clearness to the outline in the second chapter of Axtell's "The Teaching of Literature". The author finds that the extreme condensation and outline form of this chapter has made it somewhat difficult to understand. One thing must be kept clearly in mind—this chapter does *not* offer a *method* of teaching.

Another important caution is that although this chapter mentions language and principles of arrangement as proper elements to be taught; yet, let it be made emphatic that this does not mean rules of grammar or principles of rhetoric. We wish our children to enjoy the clearness

of thought which good grammar gives, but we do not wish to teach the science of grammar in connection with the teaching of literature. We wish them to feel the force, precision and elegance given by conformity to the laws of rhetoric. But the science of rhetoric has no place in the curriculum below the sophomore or junior year in college. If those who do not go to college have learned how to absorb the inspiration of a literary masterpiece, it will not matter if they never know the figures of speech. Formal rhetoric is more of a hindrance than a help to grade children in assimilating the inspiration of a literary masterpiece. It is far better that they should learn from experience how to uncover the suggested thought of a metaphor without being distracted by naming the figure and testing its validity. Young students should grasp the central thought and dominant emotion of a poem with the

least delay possible. They should come to these central elements with their powers fresh and their appetites keen. Let us not dissipate their powers on irrelevant matters.

In Shelley's poem, "To a Skylark", for instance, there is some exceptionally fine rhetoric; but there is a thought and an impulse that will revolutionize the lives of many of our pupils. There is a great yearning for the joy of life. There is the thought that this joy comes only as a result of freedom from fear and hate and pride. But for human beings such freedom comes from a spiritual mastery over these impulses. Now we wish our children to grasp this secret of happiness and to feel the lark's joy of freedom. This is a great achievement. Its value cannot be measured in dollars. Therefore we must take advantage of the high tide of interest of the pupils to teach these elements. We

cannot afford to hazard a result of such great value by digressing to a study of rhetoric.

When the teachers of arithmetic and geography are striving so diligently to eliminate all non-essentials and waste from their courses, it is bad taste for English teachers to retain in the elementary or high school course, the study of rhetoric, which is really more of a hindrance than a help in getting the best results from teaching literature to pupils of those grades.

*What should we teach when we teach
literature?*

What should we teach when we teach literature? The indefiniteness of the answer to this question in the minds of many teachers is the cause of much muddled and inefficient teaching. The general answer is that we should teach just what the author has put into his production. When we eat a piece of meat, we get from

it by the processes of digestion and assimilation just what nature put into the meat. In the course of these processes we may add something which combines with the elements of the meat to produce energy and tissue. But there must be some affinity between what we contribute and the elements of the meat or no desirable results are accomplished. Similarly in the processes of assimilating literature we are limited to the elements of the masterpiece and such assimilating store of experience as we may have. The teacher, if she would be of any use, must, therefore, know two things—first, the essential elements of the literature; second, the previous experiences of the children that will unite with these elements in such a way as to assimilate them into new mental and spiritual energy and tissue.

What, then, are the elements that an author puts into his production? To

answer this let us follow the psychological processes of the evolution of a literary masterpiece. The origin of all literature is experience. This experience may consist partly of reading, as must have been the case with Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and many other plays. And yet we recognize in these dramas many fundamental traits of human character which he must have learned from first-hand observation. Many of our best productions have come entirely from the author's immediate relations in life. *Actual experience, facts of life*, therefore, constitute the *first element* of literature.

The reason back of the author's impulse to write about these experiences is that he believes he has discovered in them a new and more inspiring meaning, a greater value, than people have commonly found in them. *Inspiring thought* therefore is the second element of literature. We

should carefully distinguish the topical outline of the abstract thought from the topical outline of the story or plot.

Usually the reason for this discovery on the part of the author is that he has had a point of view regarding these experiences different from the viewpoint of others. This he must embody in his production and make it so evident to others that they will be drawn into it. The mental power that enables the author to discover this new aspect of his experience we may call *the penetrative imagination*. Other names which might be helpful are the *interpretative imagination* or *the discovering imagination* or *the sympathetic imagination*. The product of the sympathetic insight is the *third element* of literature. It must be true, convincing, and new.

The author now has the great task of reconstructing this experience or section

of life in such a way that his new point of view and new thought will be evident in all its inspiring power. The evidence of his artistic genius is to be found in his successful ordering and arranging of his materials so that the reader is forced to feel the value of the new thought and the new point of view. Many of us who have good observing power and good penetrative and sympathetic insight lack constructive ability. *Constructive imagination*, therefore, the ability to fashion a new image from old experiences is a more advanced process and produces the *fourth element* of literature. This process is really compound, consisting of a selective functioning of the imagination and a combining or associative functioning in the evolution of a literary masterpiece.

The character of the inspiration as determined by its depth, strength, and sincerity and by its physical, intellect-

ual or spiritual suggestiveness has such force in determining the power of the masterpiece that it should be separately ranked and therefore, we say the *fifth element* of literature is *Inspirational power*. In fact many writers divide it into two elements—the aesthetic and the emotional. It is this inspirational element which distinguishes fine art from all other forms of original construction. The successful manufacturer, carpenter, statesman or railroad builder must exercise the same mental processes as the poet with the exception of this aesthetic emotion. The teacher of the fine arts, therefore, is training, perhaps better than any other pedagogue, those powers that achieve the larger successes even in material affairs. But fine art adds the appeal to the soul. And it selects only those appeals which give the soul a sense of wholesomeness, of renewed vigor, of health, which

is the essence of an aesthetic experience.

The author must now choose such language as will express these thoughts, images and emotions. *Suitable language* then, constitutes the *sixth element* of literature.

And finally certain underlying principles of relationship and arrangement must govern all the previous elements. All must be united in the aim of making the central, dominant, inspiring thought impressive. Perhaps this unity is implied in the other elements mentioned, but it is so essential that we deem it well worth while to mention as the *seventh element* of literature, *Climactic unity*.

These, then, are the essential elements of a literary masterpiece:

- I. Life experience
- II. Inspiring thought
- III. Penetrative insight
- IV. Constructive imagination
- V. Inspirational power

- VI. Expressive language
- VII. Climactic unity

These we should teach when we teach literature. It is very important that the teacher should see clearly which of these seven elements is taught in each of the four formal steps of her method. Most of the elements will be taught in more than one of the steps of the method. And during the process of each of the four formal steps the teacher will teach several of these elements.

CHAPTER II

"The skeleton in armor"

The Teacher's Preparation for teaching
"The Skeleton in Armor."

1 Facts and experiences out of which
the story was constructed.

a Country of Northmen.

b Kind of life they led and their
leading virtues and vices. Several
editions of the Nine Choice Poems
contain adequate presentation of these
facts.

c The old tower and the skeleton.

2 Thought Element.

a Central thought.

It seems to have been Longfellow's
chief thought that in the primitive,
semi-civilized condition of these people
they showed the elemental virtues which
made them builders of nations and the
progressive leaders of civilization.

b Detailed study of the thought.

The dauntless courage and roving, adventurous disposition of the Northmen caused them to spread and conquer foreign lands.

Their stout, democratic independence moved them to defy authority and control and sometimes to seek greater liberty in homes beyond the sea.

Their steadfast affection was as strong as their love of adventure and exercised a refining influence over them.

Their vices were limited to excesses of the conquering spirit, of an exuberant energy, and of the spirit of independence. They, therefore, took the form of cruelty to enemies and foreigners, riotous carousals, and lawless defiance of government. Their vices were simply the excessive manifestation of the same impulses which, when under proper restraint, constituted their

virtues. Both their virtues and vices were of a positive nature and not of the negative character which tends to degeneracy.

The characters, pictures, plot and language of the poem warrant drawing such inferences.

3 Penetrative Imagination.

After the author had acquired his knowledge of the facts and had drawn his general inferences he must have found amusement in transporting himself to the homes and adventurous expeditions of these medieval ancestors. In his imagination he abandoned himself to the primitive ambitions and impulses of the Northmen.

4 Inspirational and Emotional Element.

In the course of these reveries the author discovered the tonic of these vigorous impulses. He felt the powers that have moved this race of men and women from barbarism to imperial

culture. His patriotic ardor surged high as he realized that he had discovered in their primitive simplicity those forces of character that had founded and given stability and enterprise to his own native land, and which were still undegenerate in his own breast.

5 Constructive Imagination.

a Under the spell of these thoughts and feelings he instinctively sought for such characters, events, and scenes as would reveal to his patriotic countrymen the splendid virtues of which they were the natural heirs, of which they might be justly proud, and which they should jealously foster.

b Secondly, he proceeded to construct these events, etc. into a narrative that should make the reader thrill with admiration for these virtues. And so it resulted that we have the story of

the Viking's boyhood and youthful adventures, his simple superstitions, his democratic assumption that he might aspire to love a princess, his resentment at the ridicule by the king and his lords, his daring elopement, his fearless flight, and his steadfast love for his bride and loyalty to his race. The naked skeleton is at once suggestive of the rude, commanding nature of the thought and emotion.

6 Language.

Naturally the words and meter are of the simple, rugged character demanded by the substance. As we might expect, strength of style predominates. Such words as, "fearful", "rude", "haunt", "daunt", "pale flashes", "take heed", "dead man's curse", "wild Baltic's strand", express the indomitable spirit of the poem.

Such concrete phrases and words as,

"fleshless palms", "hollow breast", "cavernous eyes", "gleam in December", "waving his armed hand", etc., correspond with the strength of other passages.

Not many suggestive passages are found, as these are more appropriate to a more subtle, complex and refined substance. Such as there are will be found in connection with the love story, as, for instance, "soft eyes", "burning yet tender", "dark heart", "soft splendor", "yielding yet half afraid".

The pathos is expressed in the same intense, yet simple language as the determination and daring, "Still grew my bosom then", "in the vast forest here". In these passages suggestiveness helps to express the pathos.

Stanza VIII has a bit of melody but most of the vowel and consonant sounds are appropriately rather harsh.

7 Principles of relationship.

a The unity of the poem is strong throughout. Substance and form blend to emphasize the central theme and dominant emotions.

b The element of contrast is found in the rude virtues of the Viking when dealing with men and his gentleness when speaking of the Princess. The effect of this contrast is to make each characteristic more beautiful. Such contrasts in style as are illustrated in the following passages emphasize the important underlying thought that it was the interplay of the Northman's ruthless, violent savagery on the one hand and his gentle, loyal affection on the other that developed the race into the chivalrous English knight; later into the stern but hospitable Puritan; and still later into the restless, relentless but cultured and humanitarian

builder of empires, commerce, and educational and charitable institutions. Such contrasted passages are illustrated in the following: “burning yet tender”; “dark heart”, and “soft splendor”; “white stars shine”, and “dark Norway pine”; the abrupt, swift movement of the words in the last part of stanza VI and the softer, gentler, slower and more melodious movement of the words in the first part of stanza IX.

c The poem moves rapidly to a simple climax which expresses all of the underlying elements of the poem. In the Viking's last words we feel his gentle love of the Princess, his deep love of country, his masterful courage and his indomitable will.

CHAPTER III

“The skeleton in armor”

Plan for Teaching “The Skeleton in Armor.”

Preparation

I Aims

1 To give the class the point of view for properly interpreting the story. To do this it will be necessary to get the children to do some original thinking on the main problem (*dominant thought*) of the poem.

2 We must also create the romantic atmosphere (*penetrative insight*) of the period of the Northmen.

3 We must suggest how the story illustrates or is a reconstruction of a part of the life of the period when America was first visited (*the perspective view of the story.*)

II Method

1 “Nine hundred years ago in Northern Europe. No railroads, telegraphs, automobiles, newspapers, postoffices, steamships, books, public schools, manufacturing. Clothing, food, furniture, tools mostly made at home. Can you imagine how it would seem to live at that time and what kind of people lived then? (*Penetrative imagination.*) (*Also the fact element*) Aim 2.

2 What do you suppose it was in the character of the people that lived in Denmark and Norway and Sweden and in the way they lived that caused these people to come across the great ocean in their small sailing boats and discover America? (*Main thought.*)

It must have been a dangerous and dreary trip in such boats as they had. They certainly must have been very active and very brave. Do you know

whether these people were related to those who came later and settled America? Does it not seem to you that those who left their comfortable homes and their friends in those early days and settled in this far off country among savages and wild beasts must have been the bravest and most ambitious people in their countries? Would it not seem that even those who come to America today must be among the more energetic and ambitious of their class? (*The minor thought*) Aim 1.

3 When the English settled in New England they heard from the Indians the legends about palefaces who had been in this country several centuries before, and from the legends of the early Danes we learn that their ancestors discovered the Land of the Redman.

It is known that these Danes or Northmen were a roving, seafaring

people. The families were usually large and one boy was selected to remain at home and inherit the property. The other boys considered themselves more fortunate than he since they were at liberty to roam the seas and plunder the other nations of Europe. . This they did during the summer, and in winter they hunted and fished and lived a rough, boisterous life in the crude halls of their leader.

Finally tribes of Northmen invaded northern France and northeastern England and made settlements. In the year 1066 the Normans from northern France conquered England. So it was this same race of people who, with the old Saxons of England, later settled Virginia and New England. (*Fact.*) They were a fearless, warlike, conquering race.

4 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

has written a poem which shows us how these early Northmen lived and what kind of people they were. He was a poet of New England and a descendant of the Normans and Saxons of England. He was proud of these strong old conquering ancestors and his poem makes us feel their heroic, independent spirit. (*Inspirational element and imaginative perspective.*)

There was an old tower in Newport, R. I., which the Danes thought was like the forts of the old Northmen, and which they believed some of their ancient people had built. In Longfellow's time a skeleton was dug up at Fall River. It had been buried clad in rude armor and wrapped in coarse cloth and was in a sitting posture.

In the story, Longfellow associated the skeleton and the tower and caused the skeleton to tell the story of why he

came to America and built the tower. If you notice the language of the Norman, you will see what a determined, fearless man he was and yet how affectionate." (*Thought, language, perspective.*)

Presentation

I Aims

- 1 To enable the children to get the general impression from the substance and form, especially the impression of the intense, determined character of the Viking and his strong affection.

II Method

- 1 Teacher read the poem. She should be mindful of the spirit and thought of the poem.

- 2 Let pupils make a list of the words to be looked up in the dictionary. This should not be done until after the poem has been read through for its general impressions.

Association

I Aims

To intensify appreciation of all the literary elements.

To make the details of the language, thought and plot clearly understood.

II Method

1 Find which child has the longest list of words. Have him give the first word on his list. If some one can give a satisfactory definition and pronunciation let the pupil giving the word write down this definition and indicate the pronunciation. If these are not satisfactorily given put this word on the board as the first of a revised list. Go through the longest list in this way. Then get any additional words that other pupils may have and treat them in the same way.

When the revised list is thus completed, have the children look up in

their dictionaries the words on this list.
Allow about 40 seconds to a word.

2 Work out with the children a topical outline of the poem. This can be done something as follows:

"How many stanzas are devoted to the introduction and description of the skeleton?

What does stanza III tell us?

Of what part of the Viking's life are we told in stanzas IV and V?

What is the next topic? How many stanzas tell about this?

The next topic?"

By similar questioning we would work out the remaining topics.

3 Interpretation.

"Give in your own words your picture of this skeleton as it appeared to the poet.

A Introduction and description of skeleton. Stanzas I and II.

B Command to the poet and who skeleton was.

C Viking's childhood.

D Viking's youth. Stanzas VI-VII.

E Viking's wooing and request for girl.

F Elopement and chase.

G Escape and wandering.

H Life in America.

In answer to this the children will probably use some of the author's descriptive words. They will thus absorb the vocabulary.

How did the appearance of the skeleton make the author feel?

What in stanza I shows that he was afraid?

What in the description of the skeleton shows that he was a fearful object to meet.

Why would his 'hollow breast' make us shudder?

What would indicate to you that the Viking, when alive, must have been a very strong and determined man.

What did the 'pale flashes' indicate as to the Viking's feelings?

How many ever heard the water flow under the snow or under the rocks?

Can you imagine a voice sounding like that?

What was the Viking excited about?

Why was it worth telling?

Afraid (minor emotion).

The exclamation and the word "fearful."

"Hollow breast", "fleshless palms stretched".

Because it was strange to see a skeleton move.

The fact that his skeleton could rise up to command the poet to tell his story.

That he was much excited.

(Here we are teaching pupils to interpret *concrete* and *suggestive style*.)

He wanted the story of his daring life told.

Because it was a story common to a brave and loyal race.

What was there in his life that was admirable?

Is there anything in this story to show why these people were brave and determined?

What is meant by saying that her eyes were 'burning'?

Do you see any difference between the way the Viking tells the story of his sports and the way he tells of his wooing?

What is meant by saying that the champion laughed?

Describe in your own words the scene in the hall of the prince as the Viking asked for the girl.

Why did the prince refuse?

Was the Viking taking very great risk in eloping with the maiden?

That from his boyhood he mastered everything. Children suggest several things.

(Here we are teaching the *inspirational element*.)

Yes, the description of the country in which they lived. They had to be brave to go out on the "wild Baltic". They had to face danger to get their living.
(*Thought*)

It means that she had spirit and courage.
(*Suggestiveness*.)

Yes, his language is rougher and more forceful when speaking of his adventures.
(*Contrast*.)

The champion was probably a rival of the Viking.

The Viking was of low rank.

Yes, the danger of death if caught and of shipwreck if he escaped

Do you think the girl was especially brave?

How do you suppose these two felt during the three weeks of sailing westward?

What is the meaning of 'still grew my bosom then'?

Find in stanza XIX a line which pictures the loneliness of the new country.

Is there any evidence that they repented of what they had done?

Would you think any less of the two if they had concluded, after the prince refused, that the wisest thing for them to do was to give up and not try to be married?

Do you not think it was rather absurd for the Viking to shout 'Skoal! to the Northland,' after his people had driven him and his bride out?"

He lost his ambition and interest in life. (*Suggestive.*)

"In the vast forest here." (*Suggestive.*)

No, he thought that all other people were weak and cowardly compared to his own people. While he had quarreled with them, yet he thought they were the noblest and bravest people on earth.

Generalization

I Aims

To fix the general and particular impressions.

To develop powers of expression.

II Method

1 Drill briefly on pronunciation and meaning of difficult words if any have been found.

2 Have one or two oral reproductions of the story from the topical outline.

3 Have pupils read the poem orally. Give attention to expression, voice, fluency, enunciation and position. Induce children to judge reading by enjoyment they get from listening.

A Final Word of Advice and Caution

Do not fail to distinguish between the *use* and the *abuse* of methods and written plans. The proper way to use a method

is to master its philosophy and details of procedure and then revise it, abbreviate it, rearrange it, supplement it, combine it with other methods and let it be clear and emphatic to yourself and to all others that you are the master architect. So long as you are the master you can be open minded, fearless and progressive.

A plan should be thought out with vigorous logic, written, revised and thrown away. Your actual work in the class room should be determined by several factors among which are your favorite method and your written plan. But other factors quite as essential are the mental and spiritual condition of the class and yourself at the moment. A teacher who is delicately sensitive to this and is charged with the spirit of her subject will employ a method which has the subtlety and mystery of genius and which no one can outline, which no one can imitate and which she herself

can never repeat. This is *the method*. In other words, do not forget that personality is a mighty factor in teaching and that the prime factor of personality is sympathy. A countenance radiant with sympathy makes the greatest impression on pupils. In literature especially it must be a sympathy that is deep and comprehensive, sincere and fervent; a sympathy which comprehends the author and his inspiration, the child and his ideals. All that this book aims to do is to suggest a helpful procedure for preparing to develop in the class room that enthusiasm and spontaneity which will produce *the method* for you and the class at some particular hour, and which may never again be suited to any class room situation. Your next recitation will have a different method determined by a different combination of factors. Such teaching has power, and, in literature especially, no one

can measure its results in the regeneration of character, in visions revealed, in resolves that are energized and in destinies determined.

In its final analysis the teaching of literature, like the making of it, is a fine art based on a soul stirring inspiration. As a child wishes every one to join him in his love of toys and his ambitions about pet projects: as a mother longs for a confidential friend to understand her appreciation of her child; as God yearns for someone to share his aspirations for man and the univers; so the poet craves companionship in his vision; and so the true teacher of literature, hungry for fellowship in his enjoyment of life's great uplifting goodness, is compelled by the same spirit that moves God to create a sublime and harmonious universe, and moves the poet to reveal its charm and beauty. Such an impulse, the most elemental craving of all life, will in

its maturity burst all the chains of artificial and routine method. A teacher's art must be as infinitely varied and as mysteriously subtle as the characters of children and the temperaments and geniuses of poets. It must have the sensitiveness, versatility, initiative and resourcefulness of prophetic insight and inspiration.

Skeleton in armor

I

"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

II

Then, from those cavernous eyes,
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the northern skies
Gleam in December;

And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

III

"I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee!
Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

IV

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast bound
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

V

“Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the werewolf’s bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

VI

“But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair’s crew,
O’er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

VII

“Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing.

As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to o'erflowing.

VIII

"Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning, yet tender;
And as the white stars shine,
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

IX

'I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frightened.

X

“Bright in her father’s hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
 Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter’s hand,
Mute did the minstrel stand
 To hear my story.

XI

“While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind gusts waft
 The sea foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking horn
 Blew the foam lightly.

XII

“She was a Prince’s child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
 I was discarded!

Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea mew's flight,
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?

XIII

"Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!
When on the white sea strand,
Waving his armed hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

XIV

"Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
Laughed as he hailed us.

XV

“And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
‘Death!’ was the helmsman’s hail,
 ‘Death without quarter!’
Midships with iron keel
Struck we her rib of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water!

XV

“As with his wings aslant
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,—
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
 Bore I the maiden.

XVII

“Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o’er,
Cloudlike we saw the shore
 Stretching to leeward;

There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which to this very hour
Stands looking seaward.

XVIII

"There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another!

XIX

"Still grew my bosom then
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
Oh, death was grateful!

XX

“Thus, seamed with many scars
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior’s soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! *Skoal!*”
Thus the tale ended.

CHAPTER IV

Rhoecus

Teacher's Preparation

In the poem Rhoecus the author wishes to call our serious attention to the inspiring, ennobling elements of Greek philosophy and life. The modern man is entitled to profit by all that was valuable in former stages of civilization. The human race is obligated to make use of its heritage from the past. Lowell means to tell us that it is the shallowest folly for us to take a flippant and supercilious attitude toward those theories and faiths which have inspired great races or generations of human beings. Under the influence of pantheism, the Greeks lived a wonderfully vivid, alert, real spiritual existence. Modern creeds are not inconsistent with this theory of the universal presence of Divinity and our

lives may be greatly reanimated and rectified by a lively appreciation of this presence. The powerful penetration and picturesqueness of the Greek imagination has done an incalculable service for the people of all creeds and ages. Lowell's *central theme* is, therefore, that a deep reverence for nature and for the spirit that everywhere animates, designs and controls it is the first essential for wisdom and knowledge and progress either scientific, mechanical or spiritual. While it is a great and profound thought yet it is so simple that the most primitive races have felt its power. Children have a lively sympathy for such a conception of the out-of-door world. This sympathy it is our privilege to foster, refine, and mature by properly teaching poetry, nature study, the bible, science, history and mathematics.

Lowell was particularly fond of this thought. In fact, it seems to be the hub

of all his philosophy. In varied forms of expression it appears in several of his poems. We have essentially the same thought suggested in the Singing Leaves when, "deep in the greenwood" the pride swollen king becomes humble and reverent as there comes over him slowly the dim impression that he is in the mysterious presence of a being far mightier than he. "Under the Willows" suggests the thought of the universal presence of the Creator and the necessity for reverence if we would

"ever find
The inward rhyme to all this wealth of
life."

In "Sir Launfal" and "Yussouf" he expresses the kindred thought that God given opportunity for heroism is omnipresent and may be recognized by a reverent sympathy with the environment in which the Almighty has placed us. James

Russell Lowell was one of the best examples of a cultured American. With him culture consisted in the ability to analyze and solve modern problems by making use of a wide and thorough knowledge of the past experiences of the race. Culture in his opinion was simply an adequate preparation for efficient and eminent service. The prime qualification for becoming cultured was to have a humble and reverent spirit toward God, nature and man.

In the following poem, the author has given us a very sympathetic and truthful representation of the Greek conception of this philosophy. Rhoecus is a typical Greek character with a lively imagination, a lover of games and somewhat fickle in his attachments. The language and imagery of the poem express well the happy, sunny character of Greece and the Greeks. The plot sets forth the thought in a clear, convincing, concrete way. To both Lowell

and the Greeks trees seemed to be the noblest and most beautiful embodiment of the divine spirit to be found in nature. Byron found the presence of the Creator most appreciable in the ocean; Shelley, in the mountains and in the open sky with its clouds, winds, sunshine and birds; Coleridge, in the mountains with their waterfalls and glaciers and in the mystery of the ocean; Wordsworth and Burns, in the flowers and fields.

But to Lowell and the Greeks the dim, deep-wood shadows took the form of graceful divinities; the soft music of the leaves and branches was the voice of gentle spirits; the soothing effect of it all was the true manifestation of the loving soul that gave rest and healing to all who yielded to its magic influence. No one need misunderstand the heart of God as expressed in the simple, affectionate life of the trees. To commune with the Great Spirit here noth-

ing was required but sincerity, loyalty and steadfastness. But this requirement was as inexorable as fate. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." This was the theme of Lowell's philosophy of man's relation to nature, as it was the Greeks' also.

Method

Again we meet a serious problem in the question, how shall we approach this thought with children? Perhaps the necessity for sincerity has been most evident to children in their relation to animals. We might approach the thought in some such way as follows:

How many have observed that dogs and other animals like some people better than others?

Do you know any reason for this?

Might it be because some people try to find out what the dog likes and needs and give it to him?

Horses like some drivers and will obey them cheerfully. Perhaps this is because these drivers understand the dispositions of the horses and try to make them happy.

Is it not true that people like us better when we try to know them thoroughly and then treat their peculiarities and tastes with respect?

This seems to be true in a way in our relation to plants. They grow better for people who try to find out just what they need and then cultivate them in such a way as to supply these needs.

Trees grow more beautiful, make better lumber, bear better fruit, and give more perfect shade if we respect their needs and peculiarities and treat them sympathetically. Notice how the tree doctor can prolong the life of a great elm because he takes time to study its character and needs and then carefully treats it to suit its character.

It sometimes happens that we think certain people should live in a particular way, that certain animals and plants should act in particular ways. But if we study the kind of people and animals and plants they are we will frequently learn that their way of doing it is far better for them than any way that we could devise. After such study we appreciate and enjoy them and know how to work with them or use them to much greater advantage to ourselves and to them.

So long as we thought only of the value of the wood and lumber in trees, we had no science of forestry. So long as we thought only of the market value of wild game and of the products of the fields, we had no science of nature study. So long as we thought only of the work we could get out of children we had no science of child study and teaching. So long as we thought only of the least troublesome

method of getting criminals out of the way we had no science of criminology.

But when we began to study the lives and characters of these people and things we began to develop science, to know how to help and use these creatues and to make them and ourselves better and happier. In this way we have learned that some dogs are good fighters but not safe pets, some horses make excellent dray animals but never could be trotters. We are beginning to learn that some boys can become expert carpenters but could never become lawyers and that some men become criminals because no one ever helped them to discover that they might be excellent citizens in their own peculiar way.

It is this thought, that we must learn to respect people and things for what they are, to be sympathetic, sincere and unselfishly interested in them if we wish to enjoy them, this is the thought which

James Russell Lowell put into his poem "Rhoecus". Rhoecus was a generous hearted, imaginative Greek youth. But he lost his greatest opportunity for happiness because he broke his promise to a beautiful creature of the forest. The Greeks enjoyed nature and the out-of-doors more than any other people of ancient times. This story is a legend of a Greek who lost this great happiness because he did not try to understand the life out-of-doors. The story helps us to understand, however, the chief secret of the great happiness of the Greeks. They loved the trees and hills and plants and streams because they believed that good and beautiful creatures inhabited them. Everywhere in the out-of-doors they believed they were in the presence of these divine beings. It was a great sin to be negligent or to be irreverent toward them. It was the greatest happiness to catch among the trees or

along the streams a whispered message from them; hear them rush by with the wind while at their sports; to watch them play behind the fleecy clouds; to catch a glimpse of them in the shadow of the forest or the sparkle of the streams. But it was fatal to offend one of the least of these divine creatures. We shall see now how Rhoecus had a taste of this great happiness and then carelessly lost it.

The teacher will here read the poem, beginning with the story, and proceed with the method to the third step under

Note—Some of this will doubtless seem too difficult for eighth grade pupils. If this is true, omit it. But most of these children have had nature study and in the actual presence of the class many hints will come to guide the skillful teacher in framing her questions and statements to coordinate the subject with what the children know.

association. The following questions will suggest how this step may be conducted.

1 What kind of weather do you think it was when Rhoecus visited the wood? Select passages to prove your idea.

2 Can you imagine "low-toned words, serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew"?

3 Do you not think that the Dryad's gratitude was out of proportion to the labor that Rhoecus had done for her?

4 Do you think Rhoecus was very modest in his request? Or realizing that he had performed but a small service, was he greedy to take advantage of the Dryad's simple generosity and to grasp an undeserved reward?

5 Do you think he had an "endless craving" for the affection of this creature or was it merely a momentary impulse?

6 It seems evident that Rhoecus interpreted the generosity of the Dryad as

indicating that her affection was a rather cheap thing which he might enjoy without making any sacrifice or obligating himself.

7 Why was it a "perilous gift"? Because it required a corresponding devotion from the one who received it. She suspected that Rhoecus was too selfish to give this and would therefore be greatly disappointed when she rejected him.

8 Did Rhoecus stop to consider this hint? No. Why? Because he was interested only in what he was to get out of it and not what it would be appropriate for him to return to such a creature?

9 Explain the phrases, "Earth seemed to spring beneath him"; "Sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins".

10 Were the reminders which the Dryad sent all that Rhoecus could reasonably ask for?

11 Read lines 105-106 and see if the

sound of the words suggest the coming of the bee.

12 What is meant when it says he felt as if "the blood sank from his heart", etc.?

Do you think that his feeling this way was evidence that he knew that he was guilty?

13 What is meant by line 146? Rhoeus had entirely underestimated the value of what the Dryad had promised. He was spiritually incapable of seeing it.

14 Was Rhoeus simply disappointed or truly penitent?

15 What words by their sound indicate the bitterness and harshness of his disappointment? See "rattling", "crisp", "raking", "harshly", "curse".

16 The last two lines seem to indicate that instead of trying to sympathize with nature Rhoeus continued in his blindness. He was never really penitent.

Rhoecus

I

God sends his teachers unto every age,
To every clime and every race of men,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realm
of Truth

Into the selfish rule of one sole race:
Therefore each form of worship that hath
swayed

The life of man, and given it to grasp
The master key of knowledge, reverence,
Infolds some germs of goodness and of
right;

Else never had the eager soul, which loathes
The slothful down of pampered ignorance,
Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

II

There is an instinct in the human heart
Which makes that all the fables it hath
coined,

To justify the reign of its belief
And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,

*Note:—Do not try to teach stanzas I and II
to children.*

Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,
Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful hands,
Points surely to the hidden springs of
truth.

For, as in Nature naught is made in vain,
But all things have within their hull of use
A wisdom and a meaning which may speak
Of spiritual secrets to the ear
Of spirit; so, in whatsoe'er the heart
Hath fashioned for a solace to itself,
To make its inspirations suit its creed,
And from the niggard hands of falsehood
wring

Its needful food of truth, there ever is
A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,
Not less than her own works, pure gleams
of light

And earnest parables of inward lore.
Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,
As full of gracious youth and beauty still
As the immortal freshness of that grace
Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.

III

A youth named Rhoecus, wandering in
the wood,

Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,
And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,
He propped its gray trunk with admiring
care,
And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on.
But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind
That murmured "Rhoecus!" 'Twas as
if the leaves,
Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured
it,
And while he paused bewildered, yet again
It murmured "Rhoecus!" softer than a
breeze.
He started and beheld with dizzy eyes
What seemed the substance of a happy
dream
Stand there before him, spreading a warm
glow
Within the green glooms of the shadowy
oak.
It seemed a woman's shape, yet far too fair
To be a woman, and with eyes too meek
For any that were wont to mate with gods.
All naked like a goddess stood she there,
And like a goddess all too beautiful

To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.
"Rhoecus, I am the Dryad of this tree,"
Thus she began, dropping her low-toned
words

Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew,
"And with it I am doomed to live and die;
The rain and sunshine are my caterers,
Nor have I other bliss than simple life;
Now ask me what thou wilt that I can give,
And with a thankful joy it shall be thine."

IV

Then Rhoecus, with a flutter at the heart,
Yet by the prompting of such beauty bold,
Answered: "What is there that can satisfy
The endless craving of the soul but love?
Give me thy love, or but the hope of that
Which must be evermore my nature's goal."
After a little pause she said again,
But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,
"I give it, Rhoecus, though a perilous gift;
An hour before the sunset meet me here."
And straightway there was nothing he
could see
But the green glooms beneath the shadowy
oak,

And not a sound came to his straining ears
But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,
And far away upon an emerald slope
The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

V

Now, in those days of simpleness and faith,
Men did not think that happy things were
dreams

Because they overstepped the narrow
bourn

Of likelihood, but reverently deemed
Nothing too wonderful or too beautiful
To be the guerdon of a daring heart.
So Rhoecus made no doubt that he was
blest,

And all along unto the city's gate
Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he
walked,

The clear, broad sky looked bluer than
its wont,

And he could scarce believe he had not
wings,

Such sunshine seemed to glitter through
his veins

Instead of blood, so light he felt and
strange.

VI

Young Rhoecus had a faithful heart enough,
But one that in the present dwelt too much,
And, taking with blithe welcome what-
soe'er

Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in
that,

Like the contented peasant of a vale
Deemed it the world and never looked
beyond.

So, haply meeting in the afternoon
Some comrades who were playing at the
dice,

He joined them, and forgot all else besides.

VII

The dice were rattling at the merriest,
And Rhoecus, who had met but sorry luck,
Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,
When through the room there hummed a
yellow bee

That buzzed about his ear with down-
dropped legs

As if to light. And Rhoecus laughed and
said,
Feeling how red and flushed he was with
loss,
“By Venus! does he take me for a rose?”
And brushed him off with rough, impatient
hand.
But still the bee came back, and thrice
again
Rhoecus did beat him off with growing
wrath.
Then through the window flew the wounded
bee,
And Rhoecus, tracking him with angry
eyes,
Saw a sharp mountain peak of Thessaly
Against the red disk of the setting sun,—
And instantly the blood sank from his heart,
As if its very walls had caved away.
Without a word he turned, and, rushing
forth,
Ran madly through the city and the gate,
And o’er the plain, which now the wood’s
long shade,

By the low sun thrown forward broad and
dim,
Darkened well-nigh unto the city's wall.

VIII

Quite spent and out of breath he reached
the tree,
And, listening tearfully, he heard once
more
The low voice murmur "Rhoecus!" close
at hand;
Whereat he looked around him, but could
see
Naught but the deepening glooms beneath
the oak.
Then sighed the voice: "O Rhoecus!
nevermore
Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,
Me, who would fain have blessed thee
with a love
More ripe and bounteous than ever yet
Filled up with nectar any mortal heart;
But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,
And sent'st him back to me with bruised
wings.

We spirits only show to gentle eyes,
We ever ask an undivided love,
And he who scorns the least of Nature's
works
Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.
Farewell! for thou canst never see me
more."

IX

Then Rhoecus beat his breast and groaned
aloud,
And cried, "Be pitiful! forgive me yet
This once, and I shall never need it more!"
"Alas!" the voice returned, "'tis thou art
blind,
Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,
But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;
Only the soul hath power o'er itself."
With that again there murmured "Never-
more!"
And Rhoecus after heard no other sound
Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves,
Like the long surf upon a distant shore
Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.
The night had gathered round him; o'er
the plain

The city sparkled with its thousand lights,
And sounds of revel fell upon his ear
Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,
With all its bright sublimity of stars,
Deepened, and on his forehead smote the
breeze;

Beauty was all around him and delight,
But from that eve he was alone on earth.

CHAPTER V

Lowell's "Singing Leaves"

Teacher's Preparation

The *main theme* of this poem seems to be that the most valuable experiences in life are those spiritual experiences which are characterized by sincerity, simplicity, unselfishness; and which are best expressed in music and other fine arts. Another thought is the superior beauty of character in those devoted to these spiritual experiences. Still another thought is that true, unselfish affection is a foundation from which one can rise to the higher spiritual life. Another is that great thoughts and understanding come more readily to those of humble spirit, as shown in the humbled spirit of the king as he seeks the "Singing Leaves" from his page.

The poet has given this a setting in the

realm of the royal social circle for the reason that there the temptation to be arrogant, selfish and worldly is greatest. Therefore it would be there that modest, sincere devotion to the spiritual life would appear most beautiful. Here we have an effective *contrast* which gives evidence of the author's good artistic insight. However he does not intend to say that the poem is exclusively applicable to the higher social circles. He clearly suggests the universality of the beauty of the higher spiritual life.

Lowell's wide experience with people, his life as teacher, diplomat, literary man, and man of affairs has offered him opportunity for observation of men and women in varied circumstances. It is evident that he had come to divide characters into two classes—one, the worldly, selfish and un-beautiful; the other, the devoted, spiritual and beautiful. It is clear also that his

growing experience had intensified his appreciation of the latter type.

In order to express these thoughts with emphasis and win people to an appreciation of the spiritually beautiful life and character, the author chose the singing leaves as a symbol of spiritual pleasures and constructed such characters and placed them in such relation to one another that we clearly understand the thought and are quickly won to sympathy with the spiritual element. The two older daughters express their love of clothes and ornaments with a passionate but not vulgar language. We feel that the case for the vanities has been fairly and ably presented. They are not scorned, but rather are described in such language as makes them appeal. This is a strong element. It shows the poet's confidence in his ability to convince us of the superior worth of spiritual possessions.

When we discover the charming qualities of the youngest daughter we feel that the author's confidence was warranted. Her innocence and gentleness rebuke the proud and haughty king. Her tenacious love of the beautiful withstands the contempt of the royal family. Her gentle affection for her father redeems him from being a lover of vanity to being a searcher for spiritual beauty. Her discovery of high worth in the humble page shows her keen insight into character. At the end of the poem we find her fidelity to her ideals, her affection for her family, her faith in the power of goodness, all justifiably triumphant.

The elements of *contrast* are very effective in the poem—the forwardness of the two older daughters, the retiring modesty of the youngest; the impetuous harshness of the father, the patient gentleness of the youngest daughter; the stupid super-

ficiality of the king, the keen intellect and quick sensibilities of the page.

The *language* and minor imagery of the poem are delicately suggestive of the substance. The little word "up" suggests the character of the oldest daughter. The line introducing the second daughter is a little more deliberate, showing her habit of waiting her turn. A whole stanza is used to introduce the third daughter and the language is entirely devoid of the haste and impulsiveness of the former introductions. The same is true of the language in which she expresses her request. And yet the music of her speech makes us feel that her love for the thing she desires is far deeper than the love of the two older daughters for the things for which they ask. There is a very effective contrast between the arbitrary, selfsatisfied language of the king to his daughters and the bewildered, pleading words with which he appeals to

his page for help. The mystery, the quiet, musical spell expressed in the language of stanzas three and four of part two are altogether foreign to the noisy, jangling, matter-of-fact world appropriately suggested by the speeches of the king in part one.

Method

There are two parts of the method that may be difficult to work out in teaching this poem. They are number one under the method of preparation and number three under the method of association. The first is difficult because the thought of the poem is one which the children have never formulated into abstract form. Nevertheless it is one of which they have felt the force in the concrete. They quickly distinguish the difference between the impressions made by refined, gentle personalities and those made by coarse, selfish, vain people. Consequently we must

keep our questions mostly in the concrete. By doing this we can stimulate love for the ideal set forth in the poem, and this is our aim.

The children may be brought face to face with the problem by some such questions and statements as follow.

“Think of some of the people whom you like best—some of your playmates, teachers or people in stories you have read. Why did you like them better than you did others? Can you tell by the manners and looks and actions of people when you first meet them whether they have these qualities? Did you ever know anyone to acquire these qualities?” From some such concrete beginning the teacher can easily lead to a discussion of those spiritual qualities that make people lovable.

Some such questions and statements as follow may be used in the associative process.

Does the word 'up' tell us anything about the character of the oldest daughter?

How do you think she spoke when she made her request known to her father—her voice and manner?

Why would 'silks that will stand alone' be of especially good quality? They would be heavy and tightly woven and so contain a great amount of silk per yard.

Did you ever see any such silk?

What word or words in stanza four show the refined, modest taste of the youngest daughter? 'Dim'.

What kind of voice and manner of speaking do you think the youngest daughter had?

What is the meaning of line 27?

Perhaps the king remembered with regret that he had injured her mother's feelings in the same way.

What proof is there that the king had much goodness in his heart?

Do you think it was humiliating for him to be obliged to ask the page for the singing leaves?

Did you ever hear the sound described in stanzas three and four of part II? Did it not seem to suggest some bewildering mystery? Do you think the king was a lover of nature? Did he know much about it? It is evident that the king discovered here that there are some great things in life which he had never understood or appreciated. Music evidently was one of them. He now hears the melody of the rain in the forest and it bewilders him. He had regarded all these things with contempt. Here was music more soothing and restful than any that mortals could make and yet he had missed it all his life.

What words or acts of Walter indicate that he was bright and clever?

Do you suppose the king had failed to

notice that it was the habit of his youngest daughter to run to meet him when he returned home?

Who had noticed it?

What do you think these singing leaves were?

The singing leaves

I

"What fairings will ye that I bring?"

Said the King to his daughters three;
"For I to Vanity Fair am bound,
Now say what shall they be?"

Then up and spake the eldest daughter,
That lady tall and grand:
"Oh, bring me pearls and diamonds great,
And gold rings for my hand."

Thereafter spake the second daughter,
That was both white and red:
"For me bring silks that will stand alone,
And a gold comb for my head."

Then came the turn of the least daughter,
That was whiter than thistle down,
And among the gold of her blithesome hair
Dim shone the golden crown.

“There came a bird this morning,
And sang 'neath my bower eaves,
Till I dreamed, as his music made me,
'Ask thou for the Singing Leaves.' ”

Then the brow of the King swelled crimson
With a flash of angry scorn:
“Well have ye spoken, my two eldest,
And chosen as ye were born;

“But she, like a thing of peasant race,
That is happy binding the sheaves;”
Then he saw her dead mother in her face,
And said, “Thou shalt have thy leaves.”

II

He mounted and road three days and nights
Till he came to Vanity Fair,
And 'twas easy to buy the gems and the
silk,
But no Singing Leaves were there.

Then deep in the greenwood rode he,
 And asked of every tree,
 "Oh, if you have ever a Singing Leaf,
 I pray you give it to me!"

But the trees all kept their counsel,
 And never a word said they,
 Only there sighed from the pine tops
 A music of seas far away.

Only the pattering aspen
 Made a sound of growing rain,
 That fell ever faster and faster,
 Then faltered to silence again.

"Oh, where shall I find a little foot page
 That would win both hose and shoon,
 And will bring me the Singing Leaves
 If they grow under the moon?"

Then lightly turned him Walter the page,
 By the stirrup as he ran:
 "Now pledge you me the truesome word
 Of a king and gentleman,

"That you will give me the first, first thing
 You meet at your castle gate,

And the Princess shall get the Singing
Leaves,
Or mine be a traitor's fate."

The King's head dropt upon his breast
A moment, as it might be;
'Twill be my dog, he thought, and said,
"My faith I plight to thee."

Then Walter took from next his heart,
A packet small and thin,
"Now give you this to the Princess Anne,
The Singing Leaves are therein."

III

As the King rode in at his castle gate,
A maiden to meet him ran,
And "Welcome, father!" she laughed and
cried
Together, the Princess Anne.

"Lo, here the Singing Leaves," quoth he,
"And woe but they cost me dear!"
She took the packet, and the smile
Deepened down beneath the tear.

It deepened down till it reached her heart,
 And then gushed up again,
 And lighted her tears as the sudden sun
 Transfigures the summer rain.

And the first Leaf, when it was opened,
 Sang; "I am Walter the page,
 And the songs I sing 'neath thy window
 Are my only heritage."

And the second Leaf sang: "But in the
 land
 That is neither on earth nor sea,
 My lute and I are lords of more
 Than thrice this kingdom's fee."

And the third Leaf sang, "Be mine! Be
 mine!"
 And ever it sang, "Be mine!"
 Then sweeter it sang and ever sweeter,
 And said, "I am thine, thine, thine!"

At the first Leaf she grew pale enough,
 At the second she turned aside,
 At the third, 'twas as if a lily flushed
 With the rose's red heart's tide.

“Good counsel gave the bird,” she said,
“I have my hopes thrice o’er,
For they sing to my very heart,” she said,
“And it sings to them evermore.”

She brought to him her beauty and truth,
But and broad earldoms three,
And he made her queen of the broader
lands
He held of his lute in fee.

CHAPTER VI

Incident of the French camp

Teacher's Preparation

The Incident of The French Camp was published in 1843, twenty-two years after the death of Napoleon. The author, Robert Browning, was about thirty years old at this time, young enough to be impressed by the brilliant magnetism of Napoleon's career and yet mature and thoughtful enough to get a somewhat analytical perspective of the problems of the Napoleonic era. Browning was by temperament a dramatic poet and therefore he would be primarily interested in the interplay of personalities. Certainly no period in history has been more conspicuously dominated and shaped by a few great personalities—Napoleon, Well-

ington, Pitt, Nelson, Marie Antoinette, Josephine.

The Problem which seems to have interested the author was, whence was the energy which could make such radical and rapid transformations in the old, conservative empires of the world? Governments whose foundations were moss covered by the traditions of centuries crumbled like dust before the shock of the earthquake then convulsing Europe, and their constituent elements, supposed to be granite, were molded like clay in the hands of the giant personalities then shaping the new destinies of human institutions. Governments, religions, philosophies, social customs, educational systems fell in ruins one week and reappeared the next in entirely new design. Humanity and human institutions seemed to be under the spell of a great magician.

Most interpreters of the period have

seen in it little but selfishness, tyranny, bloodshed. Browning's strong hearted optimism supported in him a belief that somewhere in this unparalleled tragedy of nations we can find a great heroism. This he discovered in the fidelity and devotion of the men and boys, officers and common soldiers who endured suffering and death with grim enthusiasm. The amazing phenomenon of the period is not so much the genius of Napoleon as it is the irresistible power of a nation stirred to tragic ecstasy by a common ideal and impulse. We have here the spirit of little Sparta firing the imaginations and hearts of a nation of thirty millions. This little poem of Browning's is like a sissing brand hurled out of the great conflagration. It suggests to us to look forward to the coming of some great literary genius who can adequately stage this period of history—its nation wide hero worship, its magical military

geniuses and martial madness, its fanatical indifference to sacrifice and death, its pomp and display, its meteoric firmament of ideas and ideals, the glare of its flaming passions, and the gray pathos that has settled around its historic perspective. Browning's poem impresses us as the product of a man who saw and felt all of this but recognized the inadequacy of his genius to reconstruct it entire. He chose, therefore, to give us an "Incident" which would suggest truly what he conceived but could not completely embody. Such, then, is the *point of view* of the poem. Its thought and inspiration center around the heroic devotion of the French people. It is a noble spirit that can pay so impartial and sincere a tribute to a people who had but recently threatened to extinguish the independence of his own nation.

Method

"The story of France from 1789 to 1815 is one of the most thrilling in the history

of the world. During this time the old tyrannical monarchy was destroyed and a republic established. Then the republic was overthrown and an empire substituted for it. Many of the best people of France were in favor of establishing the republic. But during this change, bad men got control and in order to get the support of the ignorant and vicious they instituted a reign of terror in which thousands of the best people were killed simply because they were wealthy or of cultured families.

The revolutionists tried to spread the movement to other countries and so there was soon war with Russia, Austria, and England combined against France. The greatest general in France was a man of Italian race but a native of the island of Corsica which belonged to France. This was Napoleon Bonaparte.

This man became the leader of the most enthusiastic and devoted soldiers the world

has ever known. This was due to the facts that he was diligent in caring for and equipping his men, that he led them to almost miraculous victories, and that his presence inspired them with confidence. Men were eager to be in his armies, to have him see their gallantry and praise them for it. They believed that he would accomplish great things and they wished to be with him when he did it.

By the aid of these soldiers he did accomplish wonders. He defeated more great armies, dethroned more rulers, changed more governments and ruled more people than any man who had lived before him. So enthusiastic were the French people, especially the soldiers, that they made him emperor although they had suffered a terrible revolution in order to establish a republic. Many stories are told of the deeds of daring and the uncomplaining endurance of suffering by the

soldiers just out of devotion to their emperor. And yet it was a blind worship of a man who was ungrateful and selfish. In return for their great devotion he sacrificed them cruelly to maintain his personal power.

In 1843, about twenty-two years after the death of Napoleon, Robert Browning, an English poet, wrote a poem which shows us a picture of the great general and tells a story which illustrates the great love of the soldiers. This poem is entitled "An Incident of the French Camp".

Though this incident may not have occurred exactly as told, yet it is like many of the daring deeds of sacrifice performed by the soldiers. But it is probable that Browning has picked one of the actual stories from the battle field. The battle of Ratisbon occurred in April 1809. At this time Napoleon's empire was in constant unrest and frequent revolt. The

foreign nations were jealous and eager to regain territory taken by Napoleon and so were ready to attack whenever they thought they had Napoleon at a disadvantage. It was such an attack that Austria had made at this time. The Austrian Grand Duke Charles was commanding the attack. He was a very able general and Napoleon realized that if Charles should seriously defeat him now, other nations would be declaring war at once and his power would be broken. The French soldiers also doubtless realized this and so were fighting with almost superhuman energy to maintain the power of their inspiring Emperor.

In Browning's story he tells us how the news of the victory was brought to the Emperor by a wounded soldier and how the Emperor received the messenger. This messenger is called a boy. It is a fact that so many men had been killed in the French

Revolution and in the later French wars that Napoleon's soldiers at this time were mostly boys from sixteen to twenty. But they fought with a boy's enthusiasm, won victories with a boy's dash and courage, worshipped their Emperor with a boy's devotion and died with a boy's love of glory. For five years Napoleon was dependent upon the boys of France to resist the great armies of the nations and to maintain his imperial power. One of the saddest pictures in history is that of these young lads returning from the frozen regions of Russia. Poorly clad, hungry and exhausted some died of starvation, many were frozen to death and hundreds were slaughtered by the peasants and Cossacks who followed them. The world should never cease to admire those brave and loyal boy soldiers and to deplore their tragic self-sacrifice.

The story in the following poem is being

told in later years by one of these boys now grown old. The image of the Emperor is still vivid in his memory, and the spirit of the boy soldier has not lost its ardor. Imagine the old veteran as he recalls the scene of battle. He is evidently exchanging stories with an old comrade."

Teacher read the poem, make outline, etc.

Association

1 "How many have seen a picture of Napoleon?

2 Did it look like the description in stanza one?

3 Is there anything in this picture to indicate that Napoleon was intensely interested and thinking hard?

'Neck outthrust.'

4 Is there anything to indicate that he was not so excited as to lose control of himself?

'Legs wide, arms locked behind.'

5 What is the meaning of 'prone brow, Oppressive with its mind'?

His outthrust neck and shoulders drawn down and back by his hands being locked behind made him look as though his brow were thrown forward so that it hung over. The effect of this was to give him the appearance of being engaged in vigorous thought.

This habitual pose of Napoleon doubtless impressed his soldiers with his self-control and masterful intellect.

6 What change in his appearance did the message of the boy make?

'The chief's eye flashed.'

7 Don't you think that most men under such trying circumstances would have been excited when they saw the boy coming and heard his message?

8 How far had the boy ridden to give this message? A mile.

9 Was the delivery of the message a

necessity or did it make any difference in the result? No.

10 Why did the boy make this painful trip to the Emperor?

He wanted the Emperor's commendation.

11 Was there anything about the way this boy came that indicated the way the soldiers had fought?

His desperate determination to carry the good news must have been the same spirit with which he and his comrades had won the victory.

12 Were the boys most anxious to win for the Emperor or France?

13 Why did the boy try to hold himself erect when he was so badly wounded?

Because he was proud to appear strong and brave before the general.

14 Why was the soldier's pride 'touched to the quick'?

Because he saw that Napoleon failed to appreciate the sacrifice he had made."

Incident of the French camp

I

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming day;
With neck outthrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

II

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans
That soar the earth may fall,
Let once my army leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall."
Out 'twixt the battery smoke there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

III

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect—

(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

IV

“Well,” he cried, “Emperor, by God’s
grace
We’ve got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal’s in the market place,
And you’ll be there anon
To see your flag bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart’s desire,
Perched him!” The chief’s eye flashed;
his plans
Soared up again like fire.

V

The chief’s eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother eagle’s eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes;
“You’re wounded!” “Nay,” the soldier’s
pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
“I’m killed, Sire!” And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

CHAPTER VII

To a Skylark

Teacher's Preparation

Out of a mind honestly revolting against the institutions of his fellows came the vision of The Skylark, a vision of pure freedom. Out of a heart sore and wounded by its beating against the bars of social bondage came the exultant joy and transcendent yearning of this poem.

What man with all his splendid philosophy, his training, his culture, his institutions and his superior endowments has tragically missed, this simple creature of the field has found and easily appropriated. The mastery, the mental and spiritual freedom which to man can be no more than a vague dream of some infinitely remote possibility is to the skylark a present reality. How did the lark attain it? What

faith, what endowment of divine insight, what immunity from the blight of doubt and fear and hate, what close communion with the spirit that creates and sustains and supplies the abundance of life have filled the heart of this unschooled and ungoverned creature of the fields and the skies with the assurance that annihilates all sense of bondage? Such are the *central theme* and *dominant emotion* of Shelley's lyric "To a Skylark".

Through long and bitter years Shelley had carried an ideal to which he adhered with dauntless loyalty. For it he had suffered misinterpretation and ostracism. Nowhere could he find an example or even a symbol to justify it. The more his own life and his writings failed to convince others of the worth of his ideal, the deeper grew his devotion. Such had been the undying faith, the long struggle to win a low browed and enslaved race, the

ardent search for some convincing symbol, when the bursting song of the skylark in the cloudless and sun flooded sky of Italy furnished him a fitting embodiment for his ideal of perfect freedom. Such was the *point of view*, the *penetrative insight*. As a social philosophy we must frankly confess that Shelley's ideal was altogether impracticable for long ages to come. But as the song of a great hope, the vision of a glorious and triumphant destiny, the voicing of a transcendent yearning its inspiring power is irresistible.

His passion was for freedom, freedom from the conventionalities of society, the laws of institutions, from the burden and the weaknesses of the flesh, from the sordid passions of the heart. It is only fair to credit Shelley with unselfishness and sincerity and with a clear distinction between liberty and license. Perhaps we may question whether he clearly saw that the

only road to liberty is the narrow and rugged climb to selfmastery; but the goal which he saw was the true one. Shelley could not portray the heroic struggle for mastery. He missed the picturesqueness of the battle and the thrill of victory. Bunyan, Milton, Carlyle, Tennyson and others have given us that. But few men ever longed more passionately for an unfettered spirit and still fewer have conceived it more vividly.

The language of the poem has the sincerest spontaneity. It has the music of sudden and impulsive ecstasy, the strength of a soul yearning upward to its highest destiny, and the vividness of an eye enraptured by a vision of the Promised Land.

The long pent up passion suddenly released when a suitable symbol was found so dominated the construction and expression of the poem that its *unity* was a natural consequence. The oneness of the

idea was the result of years of burning thought which had long since melted away every irrelevant detail. It was therefore by mere instinct that the author selected only such facts and pictures and language as expressed his ideal. The poem seems to have sprung spontaneously from a mind and heart long primed and waiting for the spark that should set it off.

In this condition the poet wanders forth into the beautiful fields of Italy. In the midst of his reveries he is startled by a song that seems the expression of Nature's elemental joy of freedom. In the first stanzas we hear the song and see the bird in his gorgeous background. Then come six or seven stanzas in which we reflect on what we have seen. And the product of our reflection is a great ecstasy and longing, a vision of what life might be for us if we could overcome our fears and our hates and our pride.

The Skylark anywhere, even in the abstract, is interesting; but a skylark in Italy and seen there by Shelley could not be other than an occasion for ecstasy. Mortal man never flew more high on wings more light and airy than Shelley did. What a meaning and inspiration are to be derived from the scenery of Italy when we have Shelley and the skylark as interpreters! Shelley's vision is that of the great prophets; to aspire and know that we can draw on the resources of the Infinite; to run and not be weary; to mount up as with eagle's wings; to be loosed from the fetters of a dark, stifling and faithless past; to float and run in the golden lightning of the sunken sun; and to pass beyond the purple horizon into a heaven bare of clouds and filled through all its infinite space with the thrilling anthem of freedom.

Method

Now the question arises, can we teach such a poem to children: can they grasp

any conception of its meaning? Have children ever felt with Shelley the burden and the bitterness of bondage? If you have ever been an active, energetic child you know that the answer is, yes. Every good boy's story is a narration of some lad's revolt against the galling restriction of his wayward impulses. He comes nearer than anyone else to feeling exactly the same resentment and yearning that Shelley felt. Nothing is so dear to him as the liberty to make the wide world of experience his playhouse. He fashions a thousand dreams of far away times and realms where he may realize this freedom in complete fullness. He will take a vow to perform the most heroic deeds in order to achieve it. With prophetic penetration Wordsworth says:

"The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:

*Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy
But he beholds the light, and whence it
flows*

*He sees it in his joy;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of Common day."*

No one loathes the "prison house" as does the growing child. There can be no more inspiring task for the teacher than to help the young boy to see in the skylark the symbol of that freedom which the accumulating cares of life are shutting from his view.

Our task therefore is to arouse in the class the *problem of soul freedom* and to help them to get some true conception of the condition of soul that brings a man into such freedom. This we might attempt to do in some such way as follows:

“How many in this class ever thought you would like to go away to some island or forest where you could do just as you please?

“What would you do there which you cannot do now?

“Do you think you would ever want to come back and live as you live here?

“Suppose all the people here were absolutely fair and good hearted and doing all they could to make one another happy. And suppose you were off on this island alone. Do you think you would want to come back?

“I wonder how much of our discontent is due to the fact that we dislike some one

or that some one dislikes us or that we have done a mean trick to some one or we fear that some one is going to do a mean trick to us or that we are envious because some one has done better or been more favored than we or that we are not properly charitable toward one another? If we could be free from our own meanness and other people's meanness, do you not think we might enjoy a more delightful freedom right here than off on that island?

“Well, one of England's great poets, Percy Bysshe Shelley, thought a great deal about this subject. He travelled over Europe trying to find some place where a man could live and be free to do just as he pleased. Finally as he was walking through the fields in Italy one day he suddenly heard the song of a skylark above him. He watched the bird for a long time and listened to its song until it disappeared toward the setting sun. The European

skylark is a wonderful singer. It sings as it flies.

“As Shelley watched this bird going up in a spiral movement singing as it went it seemed to him that here was a creature that enjoyed the freedom for which the poet longed. The joy of the bird’s song and his liberty and ability to go where he pleased were evidence that he was not bound by the restrictions which made the poet unhappy. So the poet tried to think about the bird’s life and why it was that he did not seem to be conscious of any of this restriction.

“Now as I read the poem notice how the description of the lark’s flight and song seem to show that he is filled with joy. Notice then how the author tries to explain the cause of this joy.”

The oral reading of this poem is a specially important factor. The music of it will do as much as anything else to carry the

inspiration into the sanctuary of the child's heart.

After the poem has been read the teacher should do such dictionary work as is necessary and then help the children make a brief topical outline. This outline will have three large divisions. The first will show a series of pictures of the bird; the second, the comparisons which the poet makes; and the third, the longing which the bird inspires in the poet. The teacher should use her judgment as to whether subdivisions are desirable.

After outlining we might have a more thorough interpretation. Perhaps, instead of questioning the children as we do in most poems, it would be more effective with this poem to give a sort of running commentary as follows:

"Now let us examine the poem more thoroughly and see just what it was in the bird as Shelley saw it that made it seem

to him a creature that enjoyed this unusual freedom.

“The poet hears a burst of song from a ‘blithe heart’—no restraint, no embarrassment, just a voice singing its joy of life. Many a time we would like to do this but are restrained by fear of being ridiculed or reproved.

“Higher and still higher, no weariness, life and energy inexhaustible. He still doth soar and soaring ever singeth, endurance is no problem with him. How often our sports cease to be a pleasure because our bodies are too weary to enjoy them!

“ ‘In the golden lightning of the sunken sun’—the bird’s abundance of life and song is matched by the splendor of the heavens. See the clouds as they take on their rich colors while floating before the sun! And in this brilliant field of light and colors the bird ‘floats’—he ‘floats’—

no effort—and 'runs' for joy. After such long and violent exertion to show no weariness, no exhaustion from hunger or thirst, always going, always fresh, always eager as at the beginning of a race—the bird seems to the poet like an 'unbodied joy', a spirit freed from all the inconvenience of a heavy weight of bone and flesh.

"The scene changes. The gorgeous colors are gone. The sky is pale and purple. Can you see the 'pale purple even'? And can you see it 'melt' around the lark? The splendor of the sunset is gone, the bird is gone. But the 'shrill delight' prolongs the charm. We are oblivious to everything else. For us the world is 'bare' of objects and sounds except the song. With this the 'earth and air' are 'loud'. The heavens are 'overflowed' with a song of boundless life and joy and freedom.

"In our reverie we try to think what this wonderful creature is like. Why does he

sing? Is it for praise or fame or reward? Is it because he thinks someone is watching him? No, he is 'like a poet hidden', absorbed in thought, preferring to be alone. He is like a maiden singing of the love which she would have no one know. He is like a glow-worm avoiding display, motionless in the grass and dew lest something may discover him. He is like a rose concealed within its own green leaves from which the warm winds must steal its fragrance. He is like the soft, modest, soothing 'sound of vernal showers on the twinkling grass'. With all his joy and loveliness the lark is modest and retiring. All that ever was joyous, and clear, and fresh, his 'music doth surpass', and yet it is not for display or praise. It is just for the joy of the song, the joy of freedom to go where he pleases and do what he wills. It is joy without end; life and freshness and activity and gratification without vanity or disappointment or satiety.

"It comes from his happy thoughts.
'Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine?"

"We have never heard a song 'that pant-
ed forth a flood of rapture so divine'. It is
a flood. It fills the heavens and continues
to flow. It is warm with life. It is a
'rapture'—no restraint, no subtone of
doubt or fear or regret. It is the song
of a free spirit. Look where we will among
the songs of man and we feel an emptiness,
'a hidden want', a 'languor', a 'satiety',
a dread, or an ungratified longing. We
hear in mortal music the discordant sounds
of 'scorn', 'hate', 'pride', 'fear', greed.

"The bird must see a goodness and a
freedom in 'fountains', 'fields', 'waves',
'mountains', 'skies' and 'plains' which
we do not find. He must enjoy a freedom
from ugly feelings and from weaknesses
and ailments of the body of which we have
never dreamed. If the lark would teach
us but half the joy that he must know, it
would change our entire life."

To a skylark

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring
ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just
begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill
delight.

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven
is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of
melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded
not:

Like a highborn maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows
her bower;

Like a glowworm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen
it from the view;

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these
heavy-winged thieves;

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music
doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so
divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some
hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? What ig-
norance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad
satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a
crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught:
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of
saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should
come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the
ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am
listening now.

CHAPTER VIII

Horatius

Teacher's Preparation

The *central thought* of this poem is that patriotism, intelligence and faith in righteousness triumph over greed and tyranny and barbaric conquest; that courageous, stubborn, loyal defense of right will be victorious over gorgeous display in behalf of wrong. Here is an old but inspiring thought. It has been demonstrated many times that, no matter how great the material equipment or the prestige, individuals and armies and nations have been paralyzed and helpless when they realized that they were opposed by a superior moral force. It is an old, old principle, but it has been a tremendous factor in the rise and fall of individuals and empires. Noth-

ing blights an army like the spread of the sickening conviction that the mysterious powers of righteousness are opposed to them. Few men are so depraved that in the last desperate extremity they do not believe in the invincible power of truth and justice.

The poet has found a setting for this in the conditions of ancient Italy. Several centuries before the time of Christ the city of Rome had become the most civilized city of the peninsula. She had a system of government, a national spirit, a philosophy of public and private life and an organized social life far in advance of the cities about her. However, some of these cities rivaled her in military power and wealth. To the north was the powerful federation of Etruria. This confederacy consisted of twelve cities each having its chief and all under the leadership of Lars Porsena of Clusium. These Etruscans

were barbarous plunderers who considered the more refined and less military Romans as degenerate weaklings. They were simply waiting for a pretext to make war upon Rome and plunder it. This would mean robbing the Romans of their homes and making the people slaves.

Rome had been under the rule of a royal family of the name of Tarquin. The last king, Sextus, was an intolerable tyrant and had given a final offense to the Romans by insulting a Roman matron. The proud, liberty-loving people drove him out of the city and elected two consuls. The senate henceforth made the laws and the consuls executed them. Sextus went to Etruria and persuaded the Etruscans to gather their armies and try to restore him to the throne. At this point Macaulay begins his story.

Macaulay was naturally interested in political matters. He was a historian and

was active in the politics of his time. Being a lover of liberty and the self-government of the people he was especially interested in the history of the Roman republic and the struggle of the Roman people for liberty. Most of the Lays of Ancient Rome deal with the heroic resistance of the Roman people against the tyranny of the kings.

In the story of Horatius Macaulay has given a brilliant, vivid picture of the hosts of the barbarians assembling from country, village and city, hillside and plain; a pompous host in gorgeous array and animated by no higher motive than desire for plunder; confident in the leadership of their braggart chiefs, in their well fed and well armored hosts and in the promises of their prophets. Macaulay has given a splendid picture of an army equipped with everything except the greatest of all essentials, an inspiring, patriotic motive.

On the other side of the picture we find the Romans equipped with very little but high moral purpose, intelligence and courage.

Method

Again we must find the child's version of the theme of the poem. Perhaps we might get at it in some such way as follows.

"Suppose you and several other boys are in swimming and one large boy begins to frighten and abuse some timid small boy. He does it so much that you feel pity for the little fellow and undertake to protect him. But in order to do that you are obliged to fight the bully. On another day you go into some back alley and find a small boy playing with a new ball glove. You take it away from him and start off. Just then a boy of your own size comes along and undertakes to make you give the glove back. You have another fight. On which of these occasions do you think

you will make the better fight? Why? It was some such problem of the stimulating, hero-making power of right that Macaulay put into the poem that we are going to study.

“This poem deals with the old Romans and their barbarous neighbors, the Etruscans.” The teacher now presents a map of ancient Italy and with the help of this shows the whole legendary setting of the poem.

This is followed by steps three and four of the method of preparation and then by the presentation and first two steps of association. In step three of the preparation do not digress too far into irrelevant matter about the author. We should make sure that our pupils appreciate the author because he wrote literature that they like rather than that they infer that a certain selection must be good because some famous man wrote it. Our aim should be

to make the pupils so independent that they will not need to accept any man's O. K. for a piece of literature. In step four of the preparation see to it that the forecast is suggestive in the sense that it gives a hint of how the story works out the theme discussed under step one of preparation, but at the same time stimulates the pupil to read the poem. The teacher should explain the author's fancy that some old Roman veteran is telling this story to a later generation, probably with the purpose of arousing patriotism.

Step three under association

What bargain do you suppose Sextus made with Lars Porsena to persuade him to make war on Rome?

What do you think was the feeling of the Etruscans when they heard the summons of Lars Porsena? What were their motives for going to war?

Describe in your own words the condi-

tions in the Etruscan homes after the warriors left.

What effect do you think the words of these prophets would have upon the Etruscan warriors? What does line 81 show about the motives of these prophets?

What was the total of Porsena's army? Could there be any reason to doubt that this splendidly equipped army would be victorious over the unprepared Romans?

Does the picture of the situation at Rome indicate military system and preparedness? The streets filled with sobbing mothers, clinging babies, sick men, flocks of goats and sheep and cattle, wagons and corn,—would this be the condition in a city accustomed to military order?

What hint is given that the Etruscans were famous fighters?

What was it that stopped the panic of the Romans and aroused their fighting spirit?

For what did Horatius say he was willing to give his life? What effect did his speech have upon the other Romans?"

Horatius at the bridge

The Consul's brow was sad, and the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the walls, and darkly at the foe.

"Their van will be upon us before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge, what hope to save the town?"

Then out spake brave Horatius, the Captain of the Gate:

"To every man upon this earth death cometh soon or late.

Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul, with all the speed ye may;

I, with two more to help me, will hold the foe in play.

In yon straight path a thousand may well be stopped by three.

Now who will stand on either hand, and
keep the bridge with me?"

Then out spake Spurius Lartius—a Ram-
nian proud was he—

"Lo! I will stand at thy right hand, and
keep the bridge with thee."

And out spake strong Herminius—of Ti-
tian blood was he—

"I will abide on thy left side, and keep the
bridge with thee."

"Horatius," quoth the Consul, "as thou
sayest, so let it be."

And straight against that great array, forth
went the dauntless three.

Soon all Etruria's noblest felt their hearts
sink to see

On the earth the bloody corpses, in the
path the dauntless three.

And from the ghastly entrance, where
those bold Romans stood,

The bravest shrank like boys who rouse
an old bear in the wood.

But meanwhile ax and lever have manfully
 been plied,
And now the bridge hangs tottering above
 the boiling tide.

“Come back, come back, Horatius!” loud
 cried the fathers all:

“Back, Lartius! back, Herminius! back, ere
 the ruin fall!”

Back darted Spurius Lartius; Herminius
 darted back;

And, as they passed, beneath their feet
 they felt the timbers crack;

But when they turned their faces, and on
 the farther shore

Saw brave Horatius stand alone, they
 would have crossed once more.

But, with a crash like thunder, fell every
 loosened beam,

And, like a dam, the mighty wreck lay
 right across the stream.

And a long shout of triumph rose from the
 walls of Rome,

As on the highest turret-top was splashed
the yellow foam.

And, like a horse unbroken, when first he
feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard, and
tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb, and bounded, rejoic-
ing to be free,
And battlement, and plank, and pier whirl-
ed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius, but constant
still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before, and
the broad flood behind.
“Down with him!” cried false Sextus, with
a smile on his pale face.
“Now yield thee!” cried Lars Porsena, “now
yield thee to our grace!”

Round turned he, as not deigning those
craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena, to
Sextus naught spake he;

But he saw on Palatinus the white porch
of his home.

And he spoke to the noble river that rolls
by the towers of Rome:

“O Tiber! Father Tiber! to whom the Ro-
mans pray,

A Roman's life, a Roman's arms, take thou
in charge this day!”

So he spake, and, speaking, sheathed the
good sword by his side,

And, with his harness on his back, plung-
ed headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow was heard from
either bank;

But friends and foes, in dumb surprise,
stood gazing as he sank,

And when above the surges they saw his
crest appear

Rome shouted, and e'en Tuscany could
scarce forbear to cheer.

But fiercely ran the current, swollen high
by months of rain;

And fast his blood was flowing; and he was
sore in pain,
And heavy with his armor, and spent
with changing blows,
And oft they thought him sinking—but
still again he rose.

Never, I ween, did swimmer, in such an evil
case,
Struggle through such a raging flood safe
to a landing place:
But his limbs were borne up bravely by the
brave heart within,
And our good Father Tiber bare bravely
up his chin.

“Curse on him!” quoth false Sextus; “will
not the villain drown?
But for his stay, ere close of day we should
have sacked the town!”
“Heaven help him!” quoth Lars Porsena,
“and bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms was never
seen before.”

And now he feels the bottom;—now on dry
earth he stands;
Now round him throng the fathers to press
his gory hands.
And now, with shouts and clapping, and
noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the river gate, borne by
the joyous crowd.

—*Thomas B. Macauley*

Note—The size of this book seemed to
forbid including the full poem, but it is
recommended that it be taught entire.

CHAPTER IX

The Apostrophe to the Ocean

Note to the teacher. The work that has been done on the foregoing poems will make it easy for the teacher to discover our interpretation from the following suggestions for teaching this poem to children.

Method

“Lord Byron inherited from his father and mother a lawless disposition which neither his parents, nor his friends nor he himself could control. Because of this he suffered life-long disappointments, made many enemies and lost many friends.

It seemed to him that when he really meant to be generous, people thought him selfish, when he really loved honorable and just dealing people thought him ungrateful and cruel. For some reason which he

could not understand people whom he wanted as companions did not like his ways and avoided him. He was severely criticised and this wounded his pride. The severe social restrictions of the better people were like chains and bondage to him. He did not believe that he was obliged to be temperate and agreeable and respectable just because others were. He was a spoiled boy and a spoiled man and could not understand why he should not be permitted to do just as he pleased and allow others to do likewise.

The result was that he came to think people too petty and narrow to understand him. He felt friendless and alone. Yet he thought that his ideas of independence were right. He truly believed in himself. He believed also that somewhere was a Being who had made him and must therefore be able to understand him. This Being he sought for companionship when

others refused to associate with him. The ocean he thought was more like the natural home of such a Spirit than any other place. Its bigness and its power suggested the great wisdom and love which could understand and sympathize with one whom men had failed to appreciate.

He wrote a poem which told the story of his wandering from his native land, of his search for companionship among other peoples and among the great natural scenery of the world. But the ocean more than anything else suggested a Creator great enough to understand his hard struggle to live a life which seemed justifiable to him but to all others unworthy. His life and theories still seem wrong to us; but he was supremely wise in thinking that if anybody was great enough to understand and forgive him it must be the Spirit that created him. That Byron truly and earnestly sought companionship with this

great Spirit we cannot doubt. He suffered the great misfortune of possessing a warped disposition and a crooked vision; but he enjoyed the rarest and happiest wisdom known to man, the passionate belief that

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy
Like the wideness of the sea.”

In the wanderings of Childe Harold, the story of his life, he wrote those stanzas called *The Apostrophe to the Ocean*. In these stanzas he tells us of his great love for the ocean, how the Spirit that gave it power and greatness seemed to give him rest and happiness.

As we read the poem notice the characteristics which he mentions as showing that The Great Spirit truly moves upon the waters and notice how he finds here the satisfying companionship which he cannot enjoy elsewhere.

Apostrophe to the Ocean

I

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar.
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all
conceal.

II

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean,
roll.
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin, his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling
groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and
unknown.

III

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength
 he wields

For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful
 spray

And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth:—there let
 him lay.

IV

The armaments which thunderstrike the
 walls

Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee and arbiter of war,—
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which
 mar

Alike the Armada's pride, or the spoils of
 Trafalgar.

V

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save
thee—

Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are
they?

Thy waters washed them power while they
were free,

And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so
thou,

Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play;
Time writes no wrinkles on thine azure
brow;

Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest
now.

VI

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's
form

Glasses itself in tempest; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or
storm,

Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving;—boundless, endless, and
sublime—

The image of Eternity—the throne

Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
 The monsters of the deep are made; each
 zone
 Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathom-
 less, alone.

VII

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
 Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
 Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From a
 boy
 I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
 Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
 Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
 For I was as it were a child of thee,
 And trusted to thy billows far and near,
 And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do
 here.

VIII

My task is done—my song hath ceased—
 my theme
 Has died into an echo; it is fit
 The spell should break of this protracted
 dream.
 The torch shall be extinguished which hath
 lit

My midnight lamp—and what is writ is
writ,—

Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been—and my visions
flit

Less palpably before me—and the glow
Which in my spirit dwells, is fluttering,
faint and low.

CHAPTER X

Lines from Under The Willows

Method

How often when the weather is wearisome and the labor is hard do we long for a few hours of our favorite season and our most refreshing pastime! How pleasantly at such a time a taste of strawberry or the fragrance of a rose recalls all the beauties and delights of summer fields and skies! How it lightens our labor and revives our spirits! For just this purpose Lowell wrote his poem on June. It is entitled, "Lines From Under The Willows". With such a poem in our library we always have the flowers and birds and streams and warm sunshine. While we read, close your eyes, forget everything about you and just watch the spring come back.

Lines from Under the Willows

Frank-hearted hostess of the field and wood,
Gypsy, whose roof is every spreading tree,
June is the pearl of our New England year.
Still a surprisal, though expected long,
Her coming startles. Long she lies in wait,
Makes many a feint, peeps forth, draws
coyly back,
Then, from some southern ambush in the
sky
With one great gush of blossom storms the
world.

A week ago the sparrow was divine;
The bluebird, shifting his light load of song
From post to post along the cheerless fence,
Was as a rhymer ere the poet come;
But now, oh rapture! sunshine winged and
voiced,
Pipe blown through by the warm, wild
breath of the West
Shepherding his soft droves of fleecy cloud,
Gladness of woods, skies, waters, all in one,
The bobolink has come, and, like the soul
Of the sweet season vocal in a bird,

Gurgles in ecstasy we know not what
 Save *June! Dear June! Now God be*
praised for June.

May is a pious fraud of the almanac,
 A ghastly parody of real Spring
 Shaped out of snow and breathed with
 eastern wind;

Or, if o'er-confident, she trust the date,
 And with her handful of anemones,
 Herself as shiv'ry, steal into the sun,
 The season need but turn his hour glass
 round,

And Winter, suddenly, like crazy Lear,
 Reels back, and brings the dead May in his
 arms,

Her budding breasts and wan dislustered
 front

With frosty streaks and drifts of his white
 beard

All overblown. Then, warmly walled with
 books,

While my wood fire supplies the sun's de-
 fect,

Whispering old forest-sagas in its dreams,
 I take my May down from the happy shelf

Where perch the world's rare song birds in
a row,
Waiting my choice to open with full breast,
And beg an alms of springtime, ne'er denied
Indoors by vernal Chaucer, whose fresh
woods
Throb thick with merle and mavis all the
year.

July breathes hot, sallows the crispy fields,
Curls up the wan leaves of the lilac hedge,
And every eve cheats us with show of clouds
That braze the horizon's western rim, or
hang
Motionless, with heaped canvas drooping
idly,
Like a dim fleet by starving men besieged,
Conjectured half, and half descried afar,
Helpless of wind, and seeming to slip back
Adown the smooth curve of the oily sea.

But June is full of invitations sweet,
Forth from the chimney's yawn and thrice-
read tomes
To leisurely delights and sauntering
thoughts

That brook no ceiling narrower than the
blue.

The cherry, drest for bridal, at my pane
Brushes, then listens, *Will he come?* The
bee

All dusty as a miller, takes his toll
Of powdery gold, and grumbles. What a
day

To sun me and do nothing! Nay, I think
Merely to bask and ripen is sometimes
The student's wiser business; the brain
That forages all climes to line its cells,
Ranging both worlds on lightest wings of
wish,

Will not distil the juices it has sucked
To the sweet substance of pellucid thought
Except for him who hath the secret learned
To mix his blood with sunshine, and to take
The winds into his pulses. Hush! 'tis he!
My oriole, my glance of summer fire,
Is come at last, and, ever on the watch,
Twitches the pack thread I had lightly
wound

About the bough to help his housekeeping,
Twitches and scouts by turns, blessing his
luck,

Yet fearing me who laid it in his way,
Nor, more than wiser we in our affairs,
Divines the providence that hides and helps.
Heave, ho! Heave, ho! he whistles as the
twine

Slackens its hold; *once more, now!* and a
flash

Lightens across the sunlight to the elm
Where his mate dangles at her cup of felt.
Nor all his booty is the thread; he trails
My loosened thought with it along the air,
And I must follow, would I ever find
The inward rhyme to all this wealth of life.

CHAPTER XI

Lines on Washington

Method

The American patriots of 1775, indignant that the tyranny from which they and their ancestors had fled when leaving Europe should follow them to the New World, were determined to resist to the bitterest possible end of the struggle. With what anxious curiosity, therefore, must they have observed Washington on the day on which he took command of the army by the Old Elm in Cambridge.

In the French and Indian War he had shown himself an able general, abler than the English commanders under whom he fought. But these level-headed colonists knew full well that now they faced a struggle more desperate than had ever occurred on this continent. For such a contest

their leaders and their own courage, loyalty and endurance were all untried. The abilities of their great men and all the glorious achievements of the armies, the people and the leaders were not yet written in history. We can easily understand how they calculated the probabilities of success and failure and of the consequences of each. It was a time when they must pick their men with great wisdom. What a relief it would have been if they could have known the greatness of some of their leaders and could have foreseen the peculiar wisdom and efficiency with which these men were to lead them through the terrible struggle of the founding of the Republic! Little did the men who stood before Washington on that day realize the grandeur of their new general and the high place that he was to take among the famous men of the world.

One hundred years after this event the

people celebrated its centennial anniversary. For this occasion James Russell Lowell wrote a poem in which he has told us what was great in the man who became commander of the Continental Army in July 1775.

Lines on Washington

Soldier and statesman, rarest unison;
High-poised example of great duties done
Simply as breathing, a world's honors worn
As life's indifferent gifts to all men born;
Dumb for himself, unless it were to God,
But for his barefoot soldiers eloquent,
Tramping the snow to coral where they trod
Held by his awe in hollow-eyed content;
Modest, yet firm as Nature's self; unblamed
Save by men his nobler temper shamed;
Never seduced through show of present
good

By other than unsetting lights to steer
New-trimmed in Heaven, nor than his
steadfast mood
More steadfast, far from rashness as from
fear;

Rigid, but with himself first, grasping still
In swerveless poise the wave-beat helm of
will;

Not honored then or now because he wooed
The popular voice but that he still with-
stood;

Broad-minded, higher-souled, there is but
one

Who was all this and ours, and all men's—
WASHINGTON.

CHAPTER XII

A Concluding Consideration of Penetrative Insight

The term "penetrative insight" seems to be difficult to understand. Students find it difficult to tell just what it is when analyzing a poem. Perhaps the following illustrations and discussion may help.

If you are acquainted with many large families you have noticed that there is frequently one member, more often the mother, who is quick to interpret and understand the words, actions and facial expressions of the others. The other members feel that she has their secret.

You have noticed some storekeepers who are keen to interpret the tastes and needs of the public and their show windows and display of goods always appeal.

A man building houses to rent must surpass his competitors by choosing sites and putting into his houses conveniences and decorations that will make a special appeal. In business and in social life this faculty counts tremendously.

About Ben Adhem

BY LEIGH HUNT

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of
 peace,
And saw, within the moonlight of his room,
Making it rich and lily-like in bloom,
An angel, writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem
 bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The vision raised
 its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered: "The names of those who love
 the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay,
 not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still; and said: "I pray thee,
 then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men."
The angel wrote and vanished. The next
 night

It came again, with a great awakening
light,
And showed the names whom love of God
had blessed,
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Yussouf

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

I

A stranger came one night to Yussouf's
tent,
Saying, "Behold one outcast and in dread,
Against whose life the bow of power is bent,
Who flies, and hath not where to lay his
head;
I come to thee for shelter and for food,
To Yussouf, called through all our tribes
'The Good.' "

II

"This tent is mine," said Yussouf, "but
no more
Than it is God's; come in, and be at peace;
Freely shalt thou partake of all my store
As I of His who buildeth over these

Our tents his glorious roof of night and
day,
And at whose door none ever yet heard
'Nay.' "

III

So Yussouf entertained his guest that
night,
And, waking him ere day, said: "Here
is gold;
My swiftest horse is saddled for thy flight;
Depart before the prying day grow bold."
As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,
So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

IV

That inward light the stranger's face made
grand,
Which shines from all self-conquest; kneel-
ing low,
He bowed his forehead upon Yussouf's
hand,
Sobbing: "O Sheik, I cannot leave thee
so;
I will repay thee; all this thou hast done
Unto that Ibrahim who slew thy son!"

V

“Take thrice the gold,” said Yussouf,
“for with thee
Into the desert, never to return,
My one black thought shall ride away
from me;
First born, for whom by day and night
I yearn,
Balanced and just are all of God’s decrees;
Thou art avenged, my first born, sleep in
peace!”

Opportunity

BY EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and
swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A
prince’s banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hem-
med by foes.
A craven hung along the battle’s edge,

And thought, "Had I a sword of keener
 steel—
 That blue blade that the king's son bears,—
 but this
 Blunt thing"—! he snapt and flung it from
 his hand,
 And lowering crept away and left the field.
 Then came the king's son, wounded, sore
 bestead,
 And weaponless, and saw the broken
 sword,
 Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
 And ran and snatched it, and with battle-
 shout
 Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
 And saved a great cause that heroic day.

The Destruction of Sennacherib

BY LORD BYRON

I

The Assyrian came down like the wolf
 on the fold;
 And his cohorts were gleaming in purple
 and gold;

And the sheen of their spears was like
stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep
Galilee.

II

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer
is green,
That host with their banners at sunset
were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn
hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and
strown.

III

For the Angel of Death spread his wings
on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he
passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly
and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved and
forever grew still!

IV

And there lay the steed with his nostrils
all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath
of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white
on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating
surf.

V

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on
his mail,
And the tents were all silent, the banners
alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

VI

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their
wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of
Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote
by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of
the Lord!

Columbus

BY JOAQUIN (Hoákin) MILLER

I

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
 Behind, the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
 Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
 For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral speak, what shall I say?"
 "Why, say, 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

II

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
 My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
 Of salt wave washed his swarthy
 cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day,
 'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

III

They sailed and sailed, as winds might
blow,

Until at last the blanched mate said:
“Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.

These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone,
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and
say—”

He said, “Sail on! sail on! and on!”

IV

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake
the mate:

“This mad sea shows his teeth to-
night.

He curls his lip, he lies in wait,

With lifted teeth, as if to bite!

Brave Admiral, say but one good word;

What shall we do when hope is gone?”

The words leapt as a leaping sword:

“Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!”

V

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah,
that night—

Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
A light! A light! A light! A light!

It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!

It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! Sail on!"

Old Ironsides

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

I

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;—
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

II

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;—
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

III

O better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

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